

NEW ENGLAND PLANT CONSERVATION:
THE SCIENTIFIC BASIS FOR
EFFECTIVE ACTION

FOREWORD

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and

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On March 21, 1992, the New England Botanical Club and the the New England Wild Flower Society co-sponsored a symposium entitled New England Plant Conservation: The Scientific Basis for Effective Action. This symposium was held at Bentley College in Waltham, Massachusetts, and was attended by 175 botanists, conservationists, and others concerned with the welfare of our native flora from all over the northeast. The four papers from the symposium are presented in this issue of *Rhodora*.

As with any successful symposium, much work went into its preparation. Almost two years ago, the New England Botanical Club asked Lisa Standley to chair a committee to plan this symposium, jointly sponsored by the Club and the New England Wild Flower Society. In addition, the committee consisted of William Brumback, W. Donald Hudson and Leslie Mehrhoff. The committee was given a valuable boost when the New England Wild Flower Society hired Frances Clark as Conservation Program Officer. Frances kept us all on track, aided in the correspondence and served as tireless agent for the committee.

The symposium initiative was given further impetus by the recently formed New England Plant Conservation Program (NEPCoP), a voluntary collaboration of representatives from over sixty organizations, agencies and universities already working to protect endangered flora throughout the region. NEPCoP examines both *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation strategies and encourages cooperative action to prevent regional extirpation and to promote recovery of endangered species in the wild. The symposium committee's intention was to bring the most up-to-date information to four areas of the decision-making process where

science is most needed. This focus is the rationale for the sequence of papers. We begin with those all-too-familiar taxonomic questions that plague most conservationists, proceed to the difficulties of deciding which taxa to protect, address the processes involved in effective habitat management, and finally finish with the "sticky wicket" of *ex situ* conservation and reintroductions.

Unlike many symposia with lots of speakers and little time for interaction between the speakers and those in attendance, from the onset this symposium revolved around the idea that much would be gained from offering ample time for audience participation. Each of the speakers would be part of a panel, with a moderator and two or three panelists to respond; after the responses, the moderator was to take questions for any panelist from the floor. This format facilitated discussion and set the groundwork for further discussions during the breaks which followed each presentation.

While time and expediency prohibited us from including panelist's response and comments from the audience with each presentation, speakers had the option of incorporating these responses or comments into his or her paper. We would like to thank the following formal participants for their input to the symposium:

Taxonomic Issues and Rare Plant Protection:

Gregory J. Anderson (moderator), David Barrington and Susan von Ottingen

Setting Priorities for Regional Plant Protection Programs:

Jeanne Anderson (moderator), Anne Hecht, Leslie J. Mehrhoff and Robert E. Zaremba

Habitat Management:

W. Donald Hudson (moderator), Peter W. Dunwiddie, Susan C. Gawler and Harry R. Tyler

Reintroduction Dilemma:

Barbara St. John Vickery (moderator), William E. Brumback and Mary J. Parkin

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